

REMARKS

By this amendment, Applicant has canceled claims 1, 9, 13-19, 21-27, and 30. Claims 3 and 20 were previously canceled. Claims 2, 4, 6-8, 10-12, and 31 have been amended. Claims 32-34 have been newly added. Applicant believes all claims are facially in condition for allowance, as all the claims have either been allowed, indicated as allowable if rewritten, or depend from allowed or allowable claims.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 4, 9, 13, 18, 19 and 21-26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Balsom (U.S. Patent No. 5,592,596) in view of Hayashi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,304,525). While Applicant believes the claims to be patentable over the cited art, and maintains its arguments to that effect, claims 1, 9, 13, 18-19 and 21-26 have been canceled to secure an allowance. Applicant reserves the right to reintroduce them in a continuation application. Claim 4 has been amended to depend from allowable claim 2 and is also believed allowable.

Claims 14-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Balsom (U.S. Patent No. 5,592,596) in view of Hayashi . (U.S. Patent No.6,304,525). While Applicant believes the claims to be patentable over the cited art, and maintains its arguments to that effect, claims 14-17 have been canceled to secure an allowance. Applicant reserves the right to reintroduce them in a continuation application.

Claims 27 and 30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Balsom (U.S. Patent No. 5,592,596) in view of Hayashi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,304,525). While Applicant believes the claims to be patentable over the cited art, and maintains its arguments to that effect, claims 27 and 30 have been canceled to secure an allowance. Applicant reserves the right to reintroduce them in a continuation application.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 5, 28 and 29 were allowed over prior art.

Claims 2, 6-8, 10-12 and 31 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicant has amended claims 2, 6-8, 10-12, and 31 to include the limitations of their base claims, and believes the claims to be in condition for

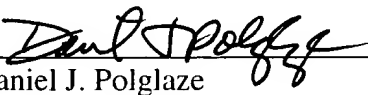
allowance. Applicant thus respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection, and allowance of the remaining pending claims. .

CONCLUSION

If the Examiner has any questions or concerns regarding this application, please contact the undersigned at (612) 312-2203.

Respectfully submitted,

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Daniel J. Polglaze
Reg. No. 39,801

Attorneys for Applicant
Leffert Jay & Polglaze
P.O. Box 581009
Minneapolis, MN 55458-1009
T 612 312-2200
F 612 312-2250